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2- U.S. UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Rural Electrification Administration  
(Washington) 25, D. C.

February 2, 1950

To : All REA Employees

From : Administrator

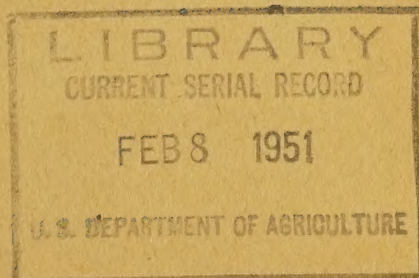
Subject: Departmental and Field Suggestions - First Report

Our employees have again offered many valuable suggestions in the conferences which were held in the field and in Washington last summer. A total of 195 was received - 101 from our field personnel and 94 from our Washington staff. These suggestions are being given detailed consideration and already several have been adopted.

Attached is the first report of the disposition of these suggestions. This year we are combining both the field and departmental suggestions in the same reports because of the interrelation between some of the field and departmental suggestions. Subsequent reports will be made as the remaining suggestions are evaluated.

*Claude R. Wickard*

Attachment





Suggested to incorporate design specifications in the Transmission Lines Engineering Service Contract similar to construction specifications in the construction contract. (Washington, Power-3)

All types of Engineering Service Contract forms (distribution, transmission or generation) prepared by REA for use by borrowers and their engineers include such things as a general description of the project, the obligations and responsibilities of the engineer, and the terms of payment. Since construction and material specifications are specifically related to the requirements of construction they have been included in the various forms of construction contracts. REA does not design projects. It is the responsibility of the borrowers' engineer to do the design work and prepare the plans and specifications taking into consideration REA guidelines as furnished through memoranda and consultation with REA engineers.

Recommend that the Power Division design one forwarding memo to cover all contract types. This memo could be so designed that all pertinent information would be contained thereon. This would eliminate the necessity for a separately typed memorandum for each contract, amendment, etc. (Washington, Power-4)

A single form has been prepared and is now being used on a trial basis in the Power Division. If it proves successful, it will replace three existing forms as well as eliminate a separately typed "approval" memorandum. The new forwarding memo also provides space for additional information required as a result of the recent delegation of authority to the Chief of the Power Division to give final approval to certain types of contracts.

It is important that people who contemplate making long distance phone calls should first obtain permission to make such calls. The Chief or Assistant Chief will give their approval if such calls are necessary. (Washington, Power-6)

The memorandum from the Deputy Administrator, dated November 1, 1946, provides that long distance calls should be limited to three minutes, and in no case should exceed the three minute limit without prior approval of the Division Chief. This policy is still in effect and it is the responsibility of each employee in the agency to adhere to it.

Have a secretary familiar with the correspondence who can perform filing, and have all incoming mail examined and routed to the proper person or persons by an engineer with proper notations. (Washington, Power-9)

The Central Records Unit of the Administrative Services Division does substantially all filing throughout the agency. We feel this arrangement has many advantages including the freeing of secretarial time for other duties.

The mail room of the Administrative Services Division has the responsibility for distributing incoming mail to the various divisions on the basis of subject matter. It is the responsibility of each division to see that the correspondence is referred to the appropriate office within the division for handling. In the event that correspondence is misdirected it is the responsibility of the person receiving it to forward it promptly to the appropriate division or person.

A routing slip indicating all names of persons and on this slip notations shown what action should be taken or request that person action he thinks should be taken. (Washington, Power-11)

In addition to the standard Reference Slip, Form AD-514, most divisions, including Power Division, use a divisional routing slip. The Power Division recently revised its slip so as to include the names of all section and unit heads as well as the action to be taken.

More time should be allowed for the "gripe" session as all "gripes" were not heard. (Washington, A&L-7)

We regret that sufficient time was not provided for this important part of our program. More time will be provided for gripe sessions in the future.

There is a shortage of good filing cabinets. Some sections are using transfer cabinets built by prison industries. (Washington, TSD-6)

New filing cabinets are being purchased within the limitations of funds available for that purpose. Purchases are made in quantities which permit meeting new needs for filing cabinets and the orderly replacement of the transfer cabinets.

The quality of the drawing paper that can be obtained from Federal Supply is very poor. This results in poor reproduction and requires additional time in completing drawings. Authority should be given to purchase drawing paper of the quality desired, or a higher quality should be furnished. (Washington, TSD-12)

We have experienced some difficulty in receiving a satisfactory quality of drawing paper from the Bureau of Federal Supply, although all such supplies are presumed to have met Government specifications. As a result of our dissatisfaction with drawing paper supplied, an inspection of the paper was recently made by the Bureau of Federal Supply. However, to date we have been unsuccessful in obtaining satisfactory results.

Folding chairs should be provided in the conference room - 2832 - particularly at meetings which are to be attended by personnel of other divisions. At times there is not enough seating capacity for all present. (Washington, TSD-13)

Additional chairs have been placed in our conference room, and it will now accommodate approximately 50 people. When more than this number are to attend a conference, arrangements for a larger room should be made through the Administrative Services Division, Property and Space Management Section, Extension 6255

Typewriters should be kept in better repair throughout the organization or, perhaps the repair of broken machines might be expedited. This was mentioned by employees in the Stenographic Pool who are sent to various offices in REA on detail and often have difficulty with poor typewriters. (Washington, Pers.-3)

Some typewriters in the Division need repair or replacement. The process of getting typewriters repaired should be simplified. The present procedure takes too long to get results and many times the malfunction of the machine is not corrected because requestor does not get to explain to repairman what needs to be corrected. (Washington, TSD-4)

We are aware of the poor condition of many of our typewriters. In July 1947, Congress placed on all appropriation bills a restriction on the purchase of typewriters and this restriction is still in effect. The repair of typewriters

is under the jurisdiction of the Public Buildings Administration, and the lack of sufficient repairmen sometimes results in delays to REA as well as other bureaus in the Department. To obtain repair service or a substitute machine call the Property Accountability Unit, Ext. 4676.

It was felt that a period of six months is hardly long enough for an office to be able to justify permanent approval of a manager. Various suggestions were made by several offices as to the procedure followed such as the scheduling of fieldmen to visit the cooperative concerned once or twice during the probationary period of the manager so that when the six months period is up, this office can be informed immediately whether to continue the employment of the manager; another suggestion was that the probationary period be extended to one year, but it was pointed out the general feeling is that six months is the most we can require, except for a very large cooperative or a G-T cooperative. It was finally concluded that if there is sufficient information on hand to make our recommendation at the end of six months we go along as we have in the past.  
(Washington, Mgmt.-4)

New managers should not be approved before an audit has been made and a report on the manager has been presented. The probationary period of six months is not long enough. (Cheyenne-Fin.-10)

As a result of these suggestions, the Committee on Approval of Managers has adopted the practice of setting a probationary period longer than six months whenever it is determined that six months is insufficient. A longer period than six months is not adopted as a general rule since it is the feeling of the Committee that in many cases six months ~~is~~ sufficient and in such cases the manager should not be kept in a probational status any longer than necessary. In submitting reports on applicants for manager positions, fieldmen should recommend a probationary period longer than six months if they feel it is desirable and list the reasons for their recommendation.

It has been requested that additional adding machines be furnished auditors in those areas where cooperative equipment of this kind is unavailable for practical and efficient use. (Chicago-5-Fin.)

The need for adding machines is recognized, and procurement of this equipment will continue within limits permitted by the budget. As additional machines are received, they will be assigned to points of greatest need as determined by the Chief, Finance Division.

Request that we be furnished with better quality typewriters. (Chicago-6-Engr.)

In July, 1947 Congress placed on all appropriation bills a restriction on the purchase of new typewriters and this restriction is still in effect.

It is requested that more attention be given by the mailroom to mail forwarded to field personnel. Packets are combined and sent to wrong person and mail is quite often not sealed. (Chicago-6-Fin.)

During the 1949 Fiscal Year, the Mail Unit processed nearly 250,000 pieces of outgoing mail. Having a relatively small staff, this Unit requires the cooperation of all divisions in following established procedure which requires: (1) That each covering letter should indicate the number of enclosures being mailed

(2) that franked labels should be addressed properly and carefully attached to the correct material to be mailed; and (3) that mail should not be fastened together (by string, rubber bands, etc.) unless the complete lot is to be sent to the same specific destination.

Each division chief is requested to review the present handling of mail in his division in order to insure that it conforms to established procedure. Although practically all outgoing letter mail is automatically machine sealed, I request that the Chief, Administrative Services Division arrange continuing checks on mail handling procedures in order to maintain the highest efficiency possible in the handling of mail.

It was requested that speedometer readings on vouchers be eliminated. It is understood that some Government agencies do not require this detail. (Chicago-8-Fin.)

Paragraph 12(a) of the Standardized Government Travel Regulations, as amended by the Travel Expense Act of 1949, provides that where transportation is authorized by privately owned automobile, distances between points traveled shall be as shown in standard highway mileage guides or by speedometer readings. Any substantial deviations from distances shown in the standard highway mileage guides shall be explained. Thus, speedometer readings may be omitted in those instances wherein the mileage may be determined from the standard highway mileage guide. Rural travel does not lend itself to such calculation and should, therefore, be supported by speedometer readings covering such official travel.

An additional supply of both letter and legal size portable filing cases should be made available at the earliest possible date. A suggested improvement in design includes a rubber cushion between the file and the lid to prevent excessive noise and dust. (Jackson 1-Mgmt.)

An additional supply of portable file cases has been ordered which is expected to meet our requirements. These cases are purchased under a General Schedule Supply Contract, and the specifications in the contract cannot be changed. This type of case is the best now available at a reasonable price. Through an exhaustive search, this case was the only one found that would serve the purpose and which was within reason from standpoint of cost.

A resolution was passed requesting that a minimum of \$25.00 a month be allowed for mileage due to the fact that an automobile is almost a necessity and that auditors in general receive very little mileage. (Jackson 2-Fin.)

Although this resolution is viewed in a most sympathetic manner, the terms of the Travel Expense Act of 1949 provides that compensation for the use of privately-owned vehicles be computed on a mileage basis. Thus it is obviously impossible for us to set a minimum amount of mileage payment which is not supported by actual mileage traveled on official business.

That definite consideration be given to providing transcribing or recording equipment to field personnel. This suggestion proposes that field reports be recorded and mailed to Washington where a typed field report would be prepared and a copy returned to the field representative. (Jackson 2-Mgmt.)

There are now 12 recording machines in field use. In addition 13 cylinder-type Dictaphone recorders are being overhauled and will be sent to the field. We plan to purchase additional recording machines for field use as fast as our funds permit.

We request that field personnel be furnished a supply of air mail stamped-addressed to REA - envelopes. (Jackson 10, Engr.)

A supply of REA-addressed air-mail envelopes has been procured for the use of field employees. These envelopes are pre-stamped and were delivered to the offices of the line divisions for field distribution in October 1949.

We request that the attention of the Government Printing Office be called to the fact that the lines on Forms 1012 do not line up on all copies. (Jackson-9-Engr.)

We are trying to have this matter corrected.

Field people need metal file cabinets for home use. It is requested that cabinets be furnished upon request, or that authorization be given for disposal of file material. (Jackson-12-Engr.)

File cabinets are in critical demand throughout the government service. For a long period of time REA has been unable to meet its minimum requirements for filing official copies of documents and memoranda. Since the material filed in field headquarters should not represent official or record copies, permanent filing is not required and fieldmen may dispose of their file material at will.

Request elimination of voucher Form 1034 by combining expenses at headquarters on Form 1012, and a simplified example for use of Form 1012. (Cheyenne-2-Engr.)

Both Forms 1012 and 1034 are standard forms required by the General Accounting Office to be used in submitting vouchers for reimbursements of expenditures. Since governmental accounting and audit functions are controlled by the General Accounting Office, we have no authority to modify existing standard procedures or forms.

Combine all weekly mail - other than correspondence - in one envelope. (Cheyenne-3-Engr.)

This suggestion, if followed, should result in a measure of economy in mail handling. Therefore, I request that each chief of a division employing a field staff give consideration to the suggestion and install this plan on a trial basis in order to determine the feasibility of utilizing the procedure permanently.

The field personnel feel that an inconsistency exists in the travel section with respect to interpretation of the various travel regulations, and would like to suggest that where a particular individual is examining the travel voucher and questions arise as to its accuracy, that he check with the Regional Head for clarification. (Cheyenne-3-A&L)

All interpretations of voucher claims are based upon travel regulations and Decisions of the Comptroller General relative to strict interpretation and application of such regulations. It has been the established practice of the Travel Audit Sub-Unit to call all questionable items to the attention of the appropriate Regional Head before an unfavorable decision is made.

The field personnel feel that the recording machines now being used are very helpful, but request that some effort be made to improve the type of recorder now being used, or that we experiment with other types of machines for comparison. (Cheyenne-4-A&L)

We have recently purchased Push-to-Talk microphones for the Mail-a-Voice recording machines which are expected to improve the machines now in use.

That in instances where travel vouchers are being held by the Washington office due to errors in preparation, these vouchers be returned to the traveler immediately upon discovery of the error for his correction so as to expedite subsequent payment. (Cheyenne-4-Mgmt.)

The audit of vouchers is performed as fast as possible during the month on a first-in, first-out basis and vouchers which cannot be audited because of error are returned to the traveler as soon as possible. During the past nine months only eight vouchers were retained in excess of twenty working days.

Request reimbursements for monthly telephone bills - excluding personal toll calls. (Cheyenne-4-Engr.)

The Departmental Regulations state, in effect, that except for telephone calls required strictly for the public business, no appropriation of the Department may be expended for telephone service installed in any private residence. Reimbursement for official calls should be claimed as heretofore by means of voucher submission.

Standards of approval of managers should be revised to give more importance to business administrative ability. (Cheyenne-9-Fin.)

The Committee on Approval of Managers, with assistance from Dr. Person, is preparing for the use of Board Members and REA field representatives, a revision of the standards for approval of managers. A check list will be provided to use in appraising the applicant's qualifications. Consideration will be given to the importance of proven business administrative ability as well as other important factors. Any suggestions by REA employees will be welcome.

We request additional meetings, preferably at six-month intervals, of fieldmen with their regional heads to discuss current problems. (Cheyenne-11-Fin.) (Jackson, A&L-4, Engr.-6) (Cheyenne, Mgmt.-3, Engr.-7)

These suggestions have been adopted and several regions have already held such meetings. Results will be studied and improvements made as additional meetings are held in the future.

Due to the fact that many, if not all of our Grade 7 auditors, are doing the same work as that required of a Grade 9 auditor, it is the opinion of Finance Division Field Personnel of Regions 7, 9 and 10 that the Grade 7 auditors should not be penalized due to lack of funds but that necessary action be taken to secure additional funds, in order that the auditor's ability may be justifiably recognized by an immediate reclassification to Grade CAF-9. (Cheyenne-3-Fin.)

In October, CAF-9 jobs were advertised and the applications received in response thereto were given a careful review. All CAF-7 auditors who proved to be qualified to perform higher grade work were promoted to CAF-9 positions.

New meters and transformers should be considered the same as other construction material. (Cheyenne-6-Fin.)

With regard to the accounting procedure in which meter and transformer costs are charged directly to appropriate plant accounts, the Federal Power Commission uniform system of accounts set the pattern for this treatment. Handling of these items of equipment in this manner minimizes the possibility of overstating plant through repeated work order charges for installation of the meters and transformers and neglect of the duty to make corresponding retirements when the items are returned to the warehouse.

Because meters and transformers are compact, expensive, and easily identifiable items of plant, they are budgeted separately with respect to loan funds available in order that advances and expenditures therefor may be easily accounted for.

We request that the field auditors who are on duty station near the places where a state association meeting is held be given an opportunity to attend the meeting. Up to now only the regional head and field supervisor of the Finance Division have attended these meetings. We believe that attendance at these meetings will be helpful to the auditors in providing an opportunity to keep in touch with current problems of borrowers since the interval between audits is a year or more. (Cheyenne-14-Fin.)

Regional Heads and Field Supervisors of the Finance Division are urged to give consideration to more frequent attendance by field auditors at statewide meetings. Factors to be considered are: the travel involved; status of the audit schedule; length of time since the auditor attended such a meeting; and the benefits likely to accrue from such attendance.

In view of recognized developments which have increased the responsibilities of auditors and the scope of their activities subsequent to the adoption of the job description now in force, it is hereby requested by field auditors of Regions 7, 9, and 10 that a new job description of their positions be prepared for the upgrading of salaries in accordance with the duties performed. (Cheyenne-2-Fin.)

As the field representatives of the Finance Division, we request that steps be taken immediately by both the Chief of the Finance Division and the Chief of the Personnel Division on the upgrading in salary of these positions. We believe this matter to be most urgent for both the morale and efficiency of the Division. (Chicago-2-Fin.)

That the Administrator is urged to request the Office of Personnel, USDA, to make the necessary inspection of the REA Project Field Auditor positions under operating conditions, at the earliest possible date, with the purpose in view of classifying these positions at a grade level comparable to similar positions of like complexity and responsibility in other Departments and Agencies.  
(Jackson-3-Fin.)

WHEREAS, office work procedures and systems of internal control vitally affect the conditions of the records and books of accounts of the borrowers, and

WHEREAS, auditors are in the borrowers' offices long enough to see the problems and to effect adequate work procedures and internal control methods

NOW BE IT RESOLVED that this phase of the work, which of necessity is actually being done by auditors, be recognized as an essential function of the auditors and be assigned to them. (Cheyenne-1-Fin.)

The Finance Division is currently working on a study of the duties and responsibilities being performed by our field auditors. This study will soon be presented to the Personnel Division and at that time a determination will be made as to which grade levels are proper for the performance of these duties and responsibilities. A determination will also be made as to the auditors' responsibilities for activities concerned with borrowers' office work procedures and system of internal control.

That corrective action be instituted by the Washington office so that correspondence from and other requests made by borrowers be given more rapid consideration at least by acknowledgement even though a final decision cannot be given momentarily. Field representatives in contact with borrowers receive criticism for delays and are faced with subsequent problems resulting from borrowers taking unauthorized actions prior to approval. (Cheyenne-1-Mgmt.)

It is important that replies to borrowers' inquiries be handled as promptly as possible and where answers have to be delayed for a period of time, the inquiries should be acknowledged. All divisions have been requested to check on the promptness with which they reply to borrowers' correspondence and make acknowledgements when necessary.

The new field report form has worked out almost perfectly in practice, with one exception--that more space be provided for the fieldman's name, title, and division. (Cheyenne-5-A&L)

The present form was laid out to provide the maximum space for writing the report as requested by many field people. This suggestion indicates perhaps we did too much "squeezing". We should like to have comments from other field people on this suggestion. If others feel that more space for this purpose is needed, it will be provided when the form is reordered.

In order to better coordinate the work in the field, we request that copies of any letters sent to the borrowers from the Administrator's office be sent to field representatives for all divisions. (Jackson-5-Engr.)

This is a very desirable practice and is being carried out now to some extent. Every effort will be made to apply it generally to letters sent to borrowers. Persons preparing correspondence to borrowers for the Administrator's office are requested to mark carbon copies for distribution to all field personnel concerned with the activities of a particular borrower.

We recommend that conferences such as is being held here be continued but that every other year the meeting be held in Washington, involving REA personnel from all 10 regions. (Jackson-6-A&L)

Consideration has been given in the past to holding an annual staff conference in Washington. It has been the consensus that three conferences in the field were less costly in travel expense and that the resulting smaller meetings permitted more people to participate in discussions. In planning the staff conference for next year, we shall request the views of the field personnel on this suggestion.

Further, it is suggested that a reprint be made of Administrative Bulletins and Memoranda in view of the fact that cooperatives in many instances do not have complete files. (Jackson-4-Mgmt.)

Administrative Bulletins and Memoranda are designed for the use of REA personnel. Any subjects of interest to borrowers are sent to them through divisional memoranda and bulletins. In the event field representatives lack certain Bulletins or Memoranda, they should request their regional office to secure copies from Central Records where a stock is maintained.

A summary outline sufficiently comprehensive of Administrative Bulletins and Memoranda should be prepared and furnished to field representatives in the interest of providing an expeditious source of policy information. (Jackson-3-Mgmt.)

An outline of all current Administrative Bulletins and Administrative Memoranda was issued as of September 1, 1949, under the title "Alphabetical Index of Symbols of Administrative Bulletins and Memoranda" and it is planned to issue this outline every six months. In this outline, the Bulletins and Memoranda are arranged by major classifications of subject matter, which is the order in which they should be filed for reference purposes. Comments from field representatives as to the value of this outline as well as suggestions for improvement would be appreciated.

The pay roll check should show pay roll period covered. This question arose from checks which have been lost in mail or not issued due to lack of Form 73. (Chicago-7-Fin.)

Each salary check bears the date of the pay day on which it was issued, and covers the pay roll period ending 12 days prior to its issuance. This holds true even though the check is not released by the Pay Roll Unit due to the lack of Form 73. The check is a standard form which is used throughout the Government and, because the pay periods vary from Department to Department, it is not practicable to show the pay periods of each Department. We believe that the check date serves the same identification purpose as the listing of the pay period.

A memorandum received recently stated that no promotions would be given because of the number of displaced employees in the Department. (Fin.-2A)

To date, authority has been temporarily revoked only once by the Department to fill vacancies for certain types of positions because of displaced career employees in the Department. This order was issued on August 3, 1949, and affected about five types of REA positions. The Order was revoked on September 19, 1949.

It is felt that the morale of the employees would be helped if we were informed from time to time of the existing situation regarding replacement of personnel. (Fin.-2B)

This is a very good suggestion and the Chief of Personnel Division is requested to keep all supervisors advised of the current situation so that they may inform their employees.

In view of Mr. Wickard's statements relative to the possibility of adding telephone facilities and the outlook on the 1950 program, we wish to stress the necessity of getting additional office personnel in the regional office of the Finance Division. (Fin.-6)

When decisions have been made concerning division responsibility for the telephone program additional positions will be authorized to carry out the additional responsibilities.

Administrative funds have been provided for the telephone program and supplemental administrative funds have been provided for the electrification program. In connection with supplemental appropriation for rural electrification, additional positions have been established for the Finance as well as to other divisions in accordance with each division's workload.

Finance Division should practice a uniform method in its regional offices of handling "normal inventories." Normal inventories are handled as in the following examples:

- (a) In work order encumbrance and in the budget.
  - (b) In work order encumbrance and not in the budget.
  - (c) Not in work order encumbrance but in the budget.
  - (d) In budget item 13.
  - (e) In neither work order encumbrance nor in the budget.
- (A&L-3)

All ten regions of Finance Division use exactly the same procedure for original establishment of normal inventories. Such inventories are set up in the work order encumbrance control and the budget is not changed unless sufficient funds were not provided in items 14 and 15 to start with. In the latter case, a 4-way memorandum or Form FI-224, would inform Applications and Loans Division of budget changes. In making changes (at the request of other divisions) in inventories previously established, all regions make the adjustment in the work order encumbrance control and, in addition, two of the regions make use of a temporary budget item under Item 13. This slight variation should not adversely affect the records of the Applications and Loans Division.

On Form FI-1588, Budget Record, space is provided at the top of the page for the purpose number, which makes it very difficult and almost impossible to readily find a particular record. Could the form be changed so that the purpose number would be placed at the bottom? (Fin.-3)

This problem is being solved by the use of tabs placed at the bottom of the budget record form. However, the suggestion will be incorporated in the form when a rerun is necessary.

In the Loan Accounts Section, many man-hours are lost because records and equipment used by the clerks are not conveniently located. The office needs to be rearranged so that the ledger sheets and files will be more readily available for the clerks, which will be a great time saver. It is felt that there is a need for some kind of cart on which to transfer a large amount of ledger sheets as they are very bulky and heavy. (Fin.-4)

New bookkeeping machines have just been received in the Loan Accounts Section and, upon completion of their installation, the physical equipment of the section will be rearranged to bring about the best working conditions and greatest efficiency possible.

It was the consensus of the group that a supply room be maintained just for the Finance Division. It would be very beneficial in getting supplies when needed. Numerous requests are received from the auditors for supplies which are needed in a hurry. It is difficult to keep complete stock of all supplies in each office. It takes several days for the Central Supply Room to fill a request for supplies.

If it is not possible to have a Division supply room, each office should at least have a stock catalogue and a special card for obtaining needed supplies in a hurry, as the other divisions of REA. (Fin.-10)

An examination of this problem indicates that the present arrangement appears to be more advantageous than to have a divisional supply room. Under the present arrangement each regional office has a supply cabinet in which it should maintain a sufficient quantity of supplies to meet day-to-day and emergency requests.

With reference to the second part of the question, the following answer was given on page 4 of the Administrator's memorandum dated April 13, 1949, under the listed subject of "Action on Departmental Suggestions - Second Report:"

"The supplies authorization card for the Finance Division may be used by regional office secretaries when there is an emergency need for supplies."

During the past year, certain actions resulting from the "gripe" session previously held have been taken. Committees have been established for standardizing procedures AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES. Since a relatively few employees have been informed of these developments, it is suggested that the Chief of the Division schedule a meeting to explain these developments. (Fin.-11)

The Administrator's memoranda with reference to the "gripe" sessions of last year have set forth the immediate steps taken as a result of the gripes. The Finance Division has developed an organization of committees to act on all

matters which require analysis and formulation of policy or procedure. Definitive action taken is made known to all the staff by means of memoranda setting forth policies and procedures, and, in the case of the Staff Committee, the minutes of all meetings are circulated among all the Washington employees of the division.

Since a memorandum had been distributed about a year ago setting out standards and formula for heat which would enable employees to be dismissed, it was suggested that the rules be abided by as it was too hot in this unit when the temperature hit that point to permit employees to work. (ASD-5)

The REA does not have authority to dismiss employees because of excessive heat. This authority rests with the Office of Personnel, USDA. When the REA Personnel Division receives a report of excessive heat, an investigation is made and the Office of Personnel, USDA is notified at once if the heat and humidity conditions justify dismissal. This may take a little time, but we know of no instance in which permission to dismiss was refused when the conditions of the heat formula were met for any unreasonable length of time. In any case, whenever an employee suffers ill effects from the heat he should go to the emergency room for treatment, or he may request sick leave.

The workload of REA personnel should be re-examined with a view to more equitably distributing the personnel and making permanent shifts within REA where such changes are advisable. (Engineering-8)

The workload of our divisions is reviewed from time to time. Classification surveys and management and procedure studies bring to light conditions of over-staffing or understaffing. Requests for additional personnel are looked into to determine need and are weighed against funds available. Employees are urged to discuss with their supervisors instances of inequitable workload distribution.